

4% more than Louisiana the next state on the list and Texas' refusal to participate in the Medicaid expansion created by the Affordable Care act puts the poor residents in my state in jeopardy.

So the 50th anniversary of Medicaid is bittersweet for Texans because while we celebrate a program that has saved lives, helped people live longer, expanded care to marginalized communities, and reduced disparities in access to healthcare, thousands of low income Texans still do not have the peace of mind that comes with access to affordable, quality health care enjoyed by low-income residents of states that have expanded their Medicaid program with funds made possible by the Affordable Care Act.

In the 18th Congressional District of Texas there are 195,400 persons with Medicaid and 74,704 with medical care provided by Medicare.

Mr. Speaker, my constituents favor the Affordable Care Act because they understand the insecurity and feeling of helplessness of being uninsured or underinsured.

Like Medicare and Medicaid, the Affordable Care Act, or "Obamacare," was vehemently opposed and derided by its adversaries, who said it was too costly, would not work, was unnecessary, or would change the character of America for the worse.

Like the critics of Social Security, Medicare, and the G.I. Bill, all of whom are silent now, they are wrong.

The Affordable Care Act has been an unqualified success.

This historic legislation has extended affordable health coverage to tens of millions of Americans, and has helped to bring peace of mind to many of those for whom relief seemed far out of reach.

The Affordable Care Act was driven by a simple premise: that citizens of the most prosperous nation on earth should not be forced to choose between their health and their financial security.

Since the passage of the ACA in 2010, the number of uninsured Americans has fallen by nearly one-third, or roughly 16 million people.

These Americans come from all walks of life.

They are women, who can no longer be denied coverage or be forced to pay exorbitant amounts for coverage simply because of their sex.

There are nine million seniors and persons with disabilities, who have saved an average of \$1,600 on expensive and lifesaving prescription medication.

And they are this country's most at risk citizens; people who are working hard and struggling to make ends meet while living in near-poverty, and who have been covered by Medicaid expansion in 27 states and the District of Columbia.

These benefits have been felt across the country, especially in my home state of Texas:

1. 10.7 million individuals with pre-existing conditions such as asthma, cancer, or diabetes—including up to 1,632,000 children—no longer have to worry about being denied coverage or charged higher prices because of their health status or history;

2. 4.9 million uninsured Texans have new health insurance options through Medicaid or private health plans in the ACA Marketplace; and

3. 5.2 million persons on private insurance have gained coverage for at least one free

preventive health care service such as a mammogram, birth control, or an immunization in 2011 and 2012.

In addition to the tangible healthcare benefits for millions of families, the ACA has had powerful effects on the financial state of our nation.

Since the passage of the Affordable Care Act, we have extended the solvency of the Medicare Trust fund by more than a decade, and helped save taxpayers \$116 billion through new Medicare efficiencies.

The Department of Health and Human Services has estimated that hospitals saved more than \$5.7 billion in costs that would have normally gone unpaid by patients without insurance.

Contrary to the claims of the law's critics, private insurance companies have leaped at the opportunity to compete for business among the newly insured, and the healthcare industry has boomed.

Through all of these successes, however, House Republicans remain obsessed with destroying this law, and with unraveling the security it provides to millions of Americans.

Medicare and Medicaid also continue to drive innovation and set the standard for coverage, quality, and innovation in American healthcare.

Mr. Speaker, Medicare and Medicaid continue to play crucial roles in providing equitable and affordable healthcare, leading innovation in payment and delivery reform, carrying out outreach to the most vulnerable communities, and reshaping the delivery of care for the future.

Because of these programs, more Americans have access to affordable, equitable health care today than at any point in our history.

And I am committed to making sure that number will continue to grow.

On this 50th anniversary of Medicare and Medicaid, we should remember that a healthy America is a prosperous America.

And as we look ahead to the next half century, we can celebrate that what was put in place in 1965 has given us the foundation for a healthy and prosperous future for all Americans.

#### HONORING BRIGADIER GENERAL DAVID T. BUCKALEW

#### HON. EVAN H. JENKINS

OF WEST VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, July 31, 2015*

Mr. JENKINS of West Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the service of Brigadier General David T. Buckalew of the West Virginia National Guard. General Buckalew has served in the West Virginia Air National Guard for more than 40 years, having enlisted in the Guard's 130th Airlift Wing in Charleston, West Virginia in December 1971. After completing his education at West Virginia State University and the Academy of Military Science, General Buckalew returned to West Virginia in December 1983 to serve as a logistics plans officer for the 130th Airlift Wing.

General Buckalew continued to serve honorably and was promoted regularly, advancing to the position of Director of Joint Staff in 2011. He has received numerous awards and deco-

rations for his service to our country, including the distinguished Meritorious Service Medal with two Bronze Oak Leaf Clusters.

I know the servicemen and women of the West Virginia Air National Guard have been inspired by General Buckalew's character and his commitment to service, and they will miss General Buckalew's presence and tremendous leadership. However, I am certain that the lessons and inspiration that he has bestowed on Guardsmen will continue to have a positive impact on their service to our nation and West Virginia.

General Buckalew is one of West Virginia's finest Mountaineers, and I along with many others wish him well in his retirement. Godspeed, General.

#### RECOGNIZING THE RETIREMENT OF TAWNY HAMMOND

#### HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, July 31, 2015*

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the distinguished career of my constituent Tawny Hammond and to congratulate her on her retirement following 26 years of service to Fairfax County and our community.

Ms. Hammond began her career with the county at the Fairfax County Park Authority (FCPA) in 1989 and served in a variety of roles including management of recreation centers, a large lakefront park and a historic farm park. Additionally, she was involved in strategic planning and accreditation, and was instrumental in FCPA being awarded multiple gold medals by the National Recreation and Park Association. During her tenure, she represented Fairfax County Park Authority at regional, state and national conferences, providing presentations on community building, revenue generation and innovative programming. In recognition of her extraordinary service to preserving and enhancing the county park system, she received numerous performance and achievement awards, most notably the A. Heath Onthank Award in 2002, which is Fairfax County's highest honor for its employees.

Ms. Hammond was named Director of the Fairfax County Animal Shelter in 2012. In just three years, she has turned the shelter into a national model for the humane treatment of animals and has made Fairfax one of the top life-saving communities in the nation. The CEO of the Humane Society of the United States proclaimed the shelter to be one of the top 1% of municipal shelters in the nation. Under Director Hammond's leadership, Fairfax County became the largest jurisdiction in the US with a live release rate of animals above 90%. On her watch, adoptions of shelter pets have nearly doubled, with 2014 seeing the highest number of dogs ever adopted in a single year (more than 1000).

Each year, approximately 5,000 animals come through the shelter's doors. Director Hammond implemented policies and programs so that no animals are euthanized for lack of space or other resources and so that all adoptable animals find loving permanent homes. She implemented new programs including shelter dog play groups and low income spay and neuter services, eliminated

breed adoption restrictions, established community cat rooms, and expanded the trap-neuter-return program, which is now the largest of its type in the Commonwealth of Virginia. She grew the volunteer program to 300 active volunteers and 150 foster families, launched the animal shelter Facebook page, which has become the County's most popular Facebook page, and started a partnership with the Fairfax County Park Authority to offer Scout programs, camps, programs and obedience classes in the shelter training room. She did all this while overseeing the total reconstruction of the shelter.

For these accomplishments, she received the 2014 Leadership Award from the Metropolitan D.C. Council of Governments, the 2014 Compassion Award by the Virginia Federation of Humane Societies, and was recently named to the Board of the Virginia Federation of Humane Societies. Upon her retirement, she was again awarded the A. Heath Onthank Award—the first person to earn this distinction twice.

Ms. Hammond is also well known for her service to the community outside of her job. She lead "Springfield Days" for more than 20 years, helping it grow to one of the County's largest special events, and served for ten years as president of the Springfield Civic Association where she was credited with making the community group accessible to the disabled and successfully tackling tough neighborhood issues such as boarding houses and hoarding.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in thanking Tawny Hammond for a lifetime of service to our community and in congratulating her on her retirement. When I was Chairman of the County Board, we often joked when retirement announcements like this were made that we should pass an ordinance not allowing such talented and dedicated people to leave public or community service, and I certainly wish that was the case here. I wish Tawny and her family all the best in this next chapter of her life.

IN RECOGNITION OF FIRST AFRICAN BAPTIST CHURCH'S 175TH ANNIVERSARY

**HON. SANFORD D. BISHOP, JR.**

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, July 31, 2015*

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, it is my honor and pleasure to extend my sincere congratulations to the congregation of First African Baptist Church in Columbus, Georgia as the church's membership and leadership celebrate a remarkable 175 years. The congregation of First African Baptist Church will celebrate this very significant anniversary with a Jubilee Celebration on Sunday, August 9, 2015 at the church in Columbus, Georgia.

Tracing its roots back to the antebellum South, African Baptist Church was founded by slaves in 1840 in a building on the corner of Third Avenue and Twelfth Street in Columbus, only blocks away from the Chattahoochee River. This building was the sanctuary formerly used by First Baptist Church, which was established in 1829 as the first church in Columbus.

Though founded by slaves, First African Baptist Church was pastored by white min-

isters during its first twenty-two years. Possessing a spirit of love and acceptance for all of humankind regardless of skin color that was unique in this time period and in this society, the members of the church opened its doors to all in Columbus who felt the call to worship. By 1858, 731 professed believers had been baptized by the church—390 white and 341 black.

From its inception through 1915, the church relocated three times to accommodate its congregation that swelled with the development of the City of Columbus. The second location was a frame building located at the corner of St. Clair and Front Street, now known as Eleventh and Front. In 1881, the Georgia General Assembly gave the land site located at Eleventh Street and Sixth Avenue to the church, and it was renamed the Six Avenue Baptist Church. This site is now occupied by Golden Foundry and Machine Company.

The current location is on the corner of Fifth Avenue and Ninth Street, where the church was renamed the First African Baptist Church in 1915. Along with the 175th anniversary of the church's existence, today I celebrate with the congregation of First African Baptist the centennial of the church's current location.

Throughout the years, the church would be remodeled and renovated several times. With these aesthetic changes came changes to the church mission. Today, under the leadership of Reverend Roderick B. Green, the church continues to grow and change with the vision of holistic transformation and continual improvement in Christ.

The story of First African Baptist Church, which began as a small group of people worshipping 175 years ago and has grown into an expansive and successful church, is truly an inspiring one of the dedication and perseverance of a faithful congregation of people who put all their love and trust in the Lord.

Mr. Speaker, today I ask my colleagues to join me in paying tribute to First African Baptist Church in Columbus, Georgia for their long history of coming together through the good and difficult times to praise and worship our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

COMMEMORATING 125 YEARS OF SERVICE OF THE EAST DUNDEE FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

**HON. PETER J. ROSKAM**

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, July 31, 2015*

Mr. ROSKAM. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to recognize the East Dundee Fire Protection District on their 125th anniversary celebration.

Throughout the year, the community will gather to recognize the heroic firefighters and paramedics who have proudly and faithfully served their community.

In 1890, the department's first year of service, firefighters responded to 25 calls while protecting the residents living in the area. Today, the fire protection district boasts a 2 million dollar budget, responds to over 1,350 calls, and covers over 10,000 residents from the Fox River to the Arboretum in South Barrington.

Throughout their history, the East Dundee Fire Department has seen its ranks swell with family members. Max Freeman, the district's

first fire chief, served with his brother Earl in the 1950's and another fire chief, Eugene Rakow, served as chief until 1986, when his son Mark took his place until late 2009.

The thirty men and women of the East Dundee Fire Protection District risk their lives daily to protect the surrounding community. Their bravery and courage are deserving of our recognition and admiration.

Please join me in celebrating this special occasion and the long years of service and commitment that it represents.

DECLARATION FOR ONE UNITED KOREA

**HON. MICHAEL M. HONDA**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, July 31, 2015*

Mr. HONDA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to submit a declaration for one united Korea as established by the organization One Dream One Korea.

On this 70th anniversary of the liberation and the division of Korea, we, the people and friends of Korea, declare that:

Korean unification is inevitable. We are one people in one land who have shared a common history and culture for millennia. Reunification of the Korean Peninsula is a profound aspiration in the hearts of the Korean people, and a national destiny that supersedes 70 years of separation and all differences of ideology and government systems.

Korean unification is desirable. The suffering of people in North Korea and the continuing anguish of separated families cry out for a concerted response from the civilized world. Nuclear threats destabilize the security of Northeast Asia in particular and the world in general. Meanwhile the people of South Korea seek a pathway to transcend materialism and dysfunctional political divides. Building One Korea offers a fundamental solution to all these problems and will advance peace and prosperity in Northeast Asia to the benefit of the world at large.

Korean unification is now achievable. In the past century Korea endured colonization and then division, at the hands of more powerful nations. Today, for the first time in modern history, Korean people possess the political and economic power to determine their own future, together with growing global support for the establishment of One Korea. We are at a historic crossroads. Set against the enormous challenges of ending the division and creating a new nation, we have an opportunity to achieve a true greatness that history rarely accords to any people. Now is the time to build a national consensus for a shared vision of One Korea on the foundation of Korean identity and a common destiny and to garner international support for it.

The Korean people share one dream: To live in One Korea we can all be proud of. Since time immemorial, the Korean people have longed for a model country; one guided by universal principles, shared moral values, and the rule of law, guaranteeing the basic human rights and freedoms endowed to all people by the Creator, as the foundation for a just and prosperous society. In realizing such a model, One Korea will become a strong, sovereign nation that acts as a peacemaker, committed to resolving conflict in Northeast Asia and the wider world. It will be a 21st century leader as a compassionate, humane nation acting with concern